EPI Update for Friday, May 6, 2011 Center for Acute Disease Epidemiology (CADE) lowa Department of Public Health (IDPH)

Items for this week's EPI Update include:

- Reminders for summer disease prevention
- Contact with armadillos a risk factor for leprosy
- State hygienic laboratory reports record testing for pertussis in 2010
- Meeting announcements and training opportunities

Reminders for summer disease prevention

The arrival of warm weather also marks the arrival of mosquitoes and ticks. Insect repellants prevent mosquito bites and repellants with DEET also prevent tick bites. Follow these guidelines when using repellent with DEET:

- Read and follow all directions.
- Use only when outdoors and wash skin with soap and water after coming indoors.
- Do not put on wounds or broken skin.
- Higher concentrations of DEET mean that the repellant effect lasts longer, but lower concentrations repel just as well.
- Products containing DEET can be used on adults and children older than 2 months of age.
- When using a sunscreen at the same time as a repellant, remember the sunscreen goes on first, followed by the repellant.

Additional actions can also reduce your risk of getting a mosquito or tick bite.

- Avoid being outdoors at dusk and dawn.
- Reduce mosquito breeding sites such as buckets, bowls and old tires.
- Replace or repair torn window screens.
- Wear light-colored clothing.
- After being outside, check your body, clothing, children, and pets for ticks.
- Reduce tick habitat around your home by removing leaves, brush and woodpiles.

Contact with armadillos a risk factor for Hansen's disease (leprosy)

Hansen's disease, or leprosy, is rare in the U.S.; about 150 new cases are reported each year. The majority of these new cases occur in people who lived or worked abroad in leprosyendemic areas. However, in the approximately one third of U.S. cases that have not traveled outside the U.S., thus the disease was probably acquired from local sources.

Most of the U.S. cases occur in Texas and Louisiana. According to a new study, wild armadillos and leprosy patients in the southern U.S. are infected with the same strain of *Mycobacterium leprae;* a strain that has not been reported anywhere else in the world. Studies have shown that contact with armadillos is a significant risk factor for leprosy acquired in the U.S. It is unknown how the armadillos first became infected, (must have acquired from humans after colonization of the New World) but they do appear to spread it among themselves easily.

Healthcare providers assessing American-born patients for leprosy should ask about possible exposure to armadillos. For additional information, visit www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMoa1010536.

State hygienic laboratory reports record testing for pertussis in 2010

The State Hygienic Laboratory tested over 6000 specimens for pertussis in 2010, more than double the number usually tested each year. This increase was in response to last year's pertussis outbreak in which approximately 650 cases of pertussis were reported. While the number tested last year was high, it paled in comparison to the number of specimens tested during the large 2004-2005 pertussis outbreak. More than 1,000 cases were reported in both 2004 and 2005 and approximately 11,760 specimens were tested for pertussis. For additional information visit: www.easterniowahealth.com/2011/05/02/iowa-hygienic-laboratory-reports-record-testing-for-pertussis-time-to-check-your-immunization-status/.

Meeting announcements and training opportunitiesNone

Have a healthy and happy week! Enjoy the warm weather and greening of lowa. Center for Acute Disease Epidemiology lowa Department of Public Health 800-362-2736